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Paul's Quotation of Isaiah 54.1 in Galatians 4.27

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The importance of the quotation of Isa 54.1 in Gal 4.27 for understanding Paul's allegorical reading of the story of Sarah and Hagar (Gen 16–21) in Gal 4.21–5.1 has often been underestimated. Paul uses this quotation to give his interpretation of this story an eschatological dimension that, unlike the eschatology of Second Isaiah, is both profoundly christological and apocalyptic.

I. Introduction

Paul quotes from the Greek OT (LXX) a number of times in his letter to the Galatians. The quotations are sometimes more or less clearly marked as such (in 3.8, 10, 13, 16; 4.30; 5.14), sometimes not (in 3.6, 11, 12). The quotation of Isa 54.1 in 4.27 is also clearly marked, being introduced with an introductory formula 'for it is written' (γέγραπται γάρ), as are the quotations in 3.10 (also γέγραπται γάρ) and 3.13 (ὅτι γέγραπται). The citation follows the text of Isa 54.1 LXX exactly.¹

εὐφράνθητι, στεῖρα ἡ οὐ τίκτουςα,
ῥῆξον καὶ βόησον, ἡ οὐκ ᾠδίνουςα·
ὅτι πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐρήμου
μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἄνδρα

Rejoice, barren one who does not bear;
break forth and shout, you who are not in labor;
for many [will be] the children of the desolate one,
more than [the children] of her who has a husband.

1 E. Verhoef, 'Er staat geschreven . . .': *De oud-testamentische citaten in de brief aan de Galaten* (Meppel, Netherlands: Krips Repro, 1979) 91–5; D. M. Smith, 'The Pauline Literature', *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars SSF* (ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988) 271; D. M. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (SNTSMS 74; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992) 248 n. 231.

Neither the LXX text nor Paul's citation of it has a verb in the third line (the corresponding text in the MT also has no verb), but the context of the verse *within Second Isaiah* (= Isa 40–55) seems to demand that a future tense (of the verb εἰμί) be mentally supplied.² In Isaiah, these words look to the future and thus promise the restoration of Jerusalem, which is here likened to a barren woman, now desolate because she is without children and thus without a future. However, there will come a time when she will have many more children than the woman who is married. This second woman is probably meant to represent Babylon, where the exiles to whom Second Isaiah is addressed live.³

Paul's use of this verse from Second Isaiah thus gives his so-called allegory⁴ of Hagar and Sarah in 4.21–5.1⁵ an *eschatological* dimension, as commonly recog-

2 Cf. RSV, NRSV, REB (present tense: NJB, KJV, NIV). Second Isaiah was probably written to and for Jerusalemites who had become exiles in Babylon (43.14; 48.20) following the destruction of Jerusalem (44.26–8; 49.14–23) early in the sixth century BCE. Second Isaiah (c.550 BCE) consoles and encourages its intended readers with the promise of a new future for Jerusalem and its exiled inhabitants (41.21–3; 42.9; 43.1–7; 44.26–8; 54.1–17).

3 J. L. Martyn's observation that there 'are not two women and two cities' in Isa 54.1 but only one woman representing Jerusalem in two phases of her history, 'first in desolation, then in fecund affluence' (*Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997] 442), applies only to the first three lines of Isa 54.1 (cf. 443, and Martyn, 'The Covenants of Hagar and Sarah: Two Covenants and Two Gentile Missions', *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* [Studies of the New Testament and its World; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997] 195). Isa 54.1 clearly contrasts two women in the third and fourth lines, the one now desolate (abandoned) but soon to be fecund, the other married and already fecund. As B. S. Childs writes: 'In vv. 1–3 the portrait of the desolate mother is set over against the joyous surprise of suddenly experiencing an abundance of children, greater in number than those conceived by a woman who was not barren' (*Isaiah* [Old Testament Library; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001] 428; also P.-E. Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe* [Études Biblique; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1972] 289). The second woman, then, may represent Babylon for Second Isaiah (on Babylon as a woman, see Isa 47.1–4). The Targum to Isaiah (from the rabbinic period) assumes two women in Isa 54.1, with the second representing Rome (the rulers of Judea at that time): 'For the children of desolate Jerusalem will be more than the children of inhabited Rome, says the Lord' (trans. B. D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus and Notes* [The Aramaic Bible, vol. 11; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987] 105). The link between Babylon and Rome was commonly made in Jewish (and Christian) apocalyptic works, namely 4 Ezra (3.1–2, 28), 2 *Apocalypse Baruch* (11.1–2; 67.6) and Revelation (14.8; 16.19; 17.5, 18; 18.2). We will argue below that Paul also assumes that there are two women mentioned in Isa 54.1.

4 Note Paul's use of the verb ἀλληγορέω in 4.24 (on which see F. Büchsel, 'ἀλληγορέω', *TWNT* 1 [1933], 262–4). It is not clear, however, whether Paul regards the story of Hagar and Sarah in Genesis as in fact an allegory, or makes the story into an allegory through the new elements he adds to it (cf. Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St Paul's Letter to the Galatians* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998] 321), or simply gives the story an allegorical interpretation (Verhoef, 'Er staat geschreven', 263–4). I will use the expression 'allegorizing interpretation' to cover the latter two possibilities, with 'allegorical interpretation' as a synonym. See further nn. 6 and 18 below.

5 There is disagreement among commentators about whether 5.1 belongs to the unit (e.g. Martyn, *Galatians*; F. Vouga, *An die Galater* [HNT 10; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998]) or not

nized.⁶ The question we seek to answer in this study, however, is: *how and why* does Paul make use of Isa 54.1 to articulate *his own* eschatology which, unlike that of Second Isaiah, is both profoundly *christological*⁷ and *apocalyptic*?⁸

(e.g. E. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921]; H. D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979]; R. Longenecker, *Galatians* [WBC 41; Dallas: Word, 1990]). In my view, it belongs to the unit because it picks up and rounds off the opposition between freedom and slavery that is introduced in 4.22 and is a recurrent theme throughout (4.23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31).

6 See e.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 248; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 215–16; J. D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* [BNTC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993] 255. Cf. Str-B 3.574–5 for the text's role in Jewish eschatological expectations.

7 Christ is explicitly named in 5.1 and 4.19 and thus provides the larger theological context within which Paul presents and interprets the allegory of Hagar and Sarah, as well as the citation from Isa 54.1. The words of Büchsel ('ἀλλήγορέω', 264) concerning Paul remain pertinent: 'Seine Allegorese wird etwas Besonderes gegenüber der jüdische – sowohl der palästinensischen als der alexandrinischen – dadurch, dass er die Schrift auslegt als einer, der in der Zeit der Erfüllung lebt ... so dass nun die eigentliche Sinn des AT erkennbar wird. Die Allegorese wird ihm zum Mittel, sein neues christozentrisches, "staurozentrisches" Schriftverständnis durchzuführen.' See D.-A. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zu Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (BHT 69; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck] 1986).

8 Aside from the commentaries, there have been a number of studies of this passage in recent years: C. K. Barrett, 'The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians', *Essays on Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1992) 154–69 (originally in *Rechtfertigung: Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann zum 70. Geburtstag* [ed. J. Friedrich *et al.*; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976] 1–16); Koch, *Schrift*, 204–11; G. Bouwman, 'Die Hagar- und Sara-Perikope (Gal 4,21–31): Exemplarische Interpretation zum Schriftbeweis bei Paulus', *ANRW* 2.25.4 (1987) 3135–55; F. S. Malan, 'The Strategy of Two Opposing Covenants', *Neotestamentica* 26 (1992) 425–40; A. C. Perriman, 'The Rhetorical Strategy of Galatians 4.21–5.1', *EvQ* 65 (1993) 27–42; K. H. Jobes, 'Jerusalem, our Mother: Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians 4.21–31', *Westminster Theological Journal* 55 (1993) 299–320; P. Borgen, 'Some Hebrew and Pagan Features in Philo's and Paul's Interpretation of Hagar and Ishmael', *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism* [ed. P. Borgen and Søren Giversen; Aarhus: Aarhus University, 1995] 151–64; Martyn, 'Covenants', 191–209; M. Bachmann, 'Die andere Frau: Synchrone und diachronische Beobachtungen zu Gal 4.21–5.1', *Antijudaismus im Galaterbrief? Exegetische Studien zu einem polemischen Schreiben und zur Theologie des Apostel Paulus* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999) 127–58; G. Sellin, 'Hagar und Sara: Religionsgeschichtliche Hintergründe der Schriftallegorese Gal 4,21–31', *Das Urchristentum in seiner literarischen Geschichte: Festschrift für Jürgen Becker zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Ulrich Mell and Ulrich B. Müller; BZNW 100; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 59–84; S. M. Elliott, 'Choose Your Mother, Choose Your Master: Galatians 4:21–5:1 in the Shadow of the Anatolian Mother of the Gods', *JBL* 118 (1999) 661–83; F. Tolmie, 'Allegorie as argument: Galasiërs 4.21–5:1 in retorie perspektief', *Acta Theologica* 2 (2002) 163–78; R. L. Brawley, 'Contextuality, Intertextuality, and the Hendiadical Relationship of Promise and Law in Galatians', *ZNW* 93 (2002) 99–119. Only Jobes and Brawley focus specifically on the citation of Isa 54.1, both build-

Since Galatians is often regarded as a letter from which apocalyptic eschatology (understood to involve a future expectation, i.e. of the parousia) is largely absent,⁹ a brief word needs to be said about apocalyptic.¹⁰ I here focus on those aspects that are particularly important for Paul's adaptation of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology in the passage chosen for analysis. Fundamental to (Jewish or Christian) apocalyptic is the notion of two world ages ('this age' and 'the age to come'), both of which are matters of revelation (cf. Rev 1.1). The two ages are not simply, or even primarily, temporal categories, referring to two successive, discontinuous periods of world history ('ages'); they are also (at least in one prominent strand of Jewish apocalyptic thinking)¹¹ spatial categories, referring to two spheres or orbs of power both of which claim sovereignty over the world. In 'this age', alien, destructive powers have taken complete control of God's creation, including the cosmos of human beings, and perverted it. 'This age' is, then, the realm of sin, death, and evil (what Paul in Gal 1.4 refers to as 'the present evil age'). Human beings are slaves of evil, malevolent powers that have usurped God's rightful claim on the world. In 'the age to come', which in Jewish apocalyptic eschatology is to be revealed in the future even as it already exists in heaven above, God will (once more) reign unopposed over the whole creation. For this reason, 'the age to come' is the realm of righteousness, life, and peace. The powers of the new age (God and those whom he delegates, e.g. the Messiah) will thus at the end of time reveal themselves, i.e., invade from heaven above the orb of the powers on earth below (the orb of Satan and his minions) and aggressively defeat them, thereby removing them from the creation and liberating human beings

ing on the treatment of R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1989) 105–21. Their concern is the phenomenon of intertextuality, not the apocalyptic import of Paul's use of this text. Both Jobes and Brawley, furthermore, fail to take sufficiently into account how Paul's Gentile-Christian hearers/readers in Galatia would have heard the text, i.e. whether and to what extent they would have recognized the intertextual echoes laid bare in their respective analyses.

- ⁹ See J. C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 37–58; contrast Martyn, *Galatians*, 97–105; *idem*, *Theological Issues*, 85–156, 176–82.
- ¹⁰ See M. C. de Boer, 'Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology', *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* (vol. 1; ed. J. J. Collins; New York: Continuum, 1998) 345–83; *idem*, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* (JSNTSup 22; Sheffield: JSOT, 1988); *idem*, 'Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology', *Apocalyptic and the New Testament* (ed. J. Marcus and M. Soards; FS J. L. Martyn; JSNTSup 24; Sheffield: JSOT, 1989) 169–90; *idem*, 'Paul, Theologian of God's Apocalypse', *Interpretation* 56 (2002) 21–33.
- ¹¹ Identified in de Boer, 'Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology' and 'Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology', as the 'cosmological' pattern, which is to be distinguished from the 'forensic' pattern. Martyn has made creative use of this distinction in his commentary (*Galatians*, esp. 97–8).

from their malevolent, destructive control. Within the framework of the apocalyptic dualism of the two world ages understood spatially as well as temporally, this end-time event (traditionally known as the 'Last Judgment') is necessarily (1) cosmic in scope and implication (all peoples and all times are affected), (2) an act of God (God invades the human cosmos since human beings are in no position to liberate themselves from the evil powers), (3) rectifying (God puts right what has gone wrong in and with the world) and (4) eschatological (i.e. final, definitive, and irrevocable). In ancient Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, the turn of the ages, when 'this age' is brought to an end and 'the age to come' takes its place, will signify God's eschatological act of cosmic rectification.

In *Paul's* view, God has initiated this eschatological act of cosmic rectification in the person and work of Jesus Christ. When God sent forth his Son into the world (Gal 4.4) to liberate human beings from enslaving powers (4.3–4), God began a unified apocalyptic drama of cosmic rectification that will reach its conclusion at Christ's parousia (1 Thess 4.13–18; 1 Cor 15.20–8). Believers live neither in the old age nor in the new; they live at the juncture of the ages where the forces of the new age ('the kingdom of God') are in an ongoing struggle with the forces of the old age (especially sin, death and, surprisingly, the Sinaitic Law).¹² Paul's christological adaptation of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology thus contains the well-known tension between an 'already' (God has already acted apocalyptically to liberate human beings from enslaving powers)¹³ and a 'still more' (God has not yet finished the job).¹⁴ In Galatians, the emphasis falls decisively upon the 'already' of God's apocalyptic action in sending forth his Son into the human world to liberate human beings from suprahuman, enslaving powers, thereby 'rectifying' (δικαίω) what has gone wrong in their relationship with God (1.4; 2.16; 3.13; 4.1–6).¹⁵

Paul's peculiar interpretation of the story of Hagar and Sarah (and Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac) in Gal 4.21–5.1 also places the emphasis on the 'already', as 5.1a

12 This point is controversial, but one may note how in *Galatians* Paul can speak of (all) human beings before and apart from Christ as being ὑπὸ νόμον, 'under the Law' (3.23; 4.4–5, 21; 5.18), whereby the Law is presented as an oppressive, enslaving power from which Christ redeems human beings (3.13; 4.4–5). To be 'under the Law' is to be 'under a curse' (3.10), 'under a custodian' (3.25), 'under guardians and overseers' (4.2), 'under the elements of the cosmos' (4.3), and, indeed, 'under Sin' (3.22). See Martyn, *Galatians*, 370–3. Cf. Rom 6.14–15.

13 Cf. Gal 5.1: 'For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery' (NRSV).

14 Cf. Gal 5.5: 'For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness' (NRSV).

15 See Martyn, *Theological Issues*, 121–2: 'It is [in Galatians] the time after the apocalypse of the faith of Christ (3.23–25), the time of things being set right by that faith, the time of the presence of the Spirit, and thus the time of a new war of liberation commenced by the Spirit.' For 'rectify' and 'rectification' as translations of δικαίω and its cognate noun δικαιοσύνη, see Martyn, *Galatians*, 249–50.

makes absolutely clear, and this means that the promise of Isa 54.1 has for Paul been fulfilled, or at least is in the process of being fulfilled now that Christ and his Spirit have come into the human world (cf. 3.1–5; 4.1–7).

II. The function of Isa 54.1 in Paul's argument¹⁶

As noted above, Paul cites the verse in his allegorizing interpretation of the story about Hagar and Sarah in Genesis. Abraham had sons by both women (4.22), Ishmael and Isaac respectively (cf. Gen 16.1–16; 17.15–27; 18.9–15; 21.1–21).¹⁷ Paul is scarcely interested in the two women or the two sons, however, except insofar as they serve as symbols for realities and developments in the past (i.e. in the history of Abraham and his descendants) and as types pointing beyond themselves to realities and developments in Paul's own time and situation (Paul's allegorical reading of the Genesis narrative thus has typological dimensions).¹⁸

Allegorically interpreted, the two women represent 'two covenants' (4.24) for Paul, even though Genesis in fact mentions only one covenant with Abraham and his offspring (Gen 15.18; 17.1–8), as Paul knows (Gal 3.15–17). According to Gen 17.19–21, this one covenant was valid only for the line of descent established through Isaac, not for the line of descent established through Ishmael. For Paul, Hagar allegorically represents another covenant, namely, the one with Moses on 'Mount Sinai' (Gal 4.24–5),¹⁹ despite the fact that this covenant came into effect, by

16 In this section we focus on *how* Paul deploys Isa 54.1 in his *argumentation in a way that will have made sense to his readers or hearers in Galatia*, in the next section on *why* he does so. The separation between the 'how' question and the 'why' question is merely a matter of convenience and emphasis, however. The two can scarcely be neatly separated since both questions seek to discover Paul's *intention* (his message to the churches in Galatia) in making use of Isa 54.1.

17 Paul quotes Gen 21.10 in 4.30, but 4.22–3 seems to be a summary of the Sarah–Hagar material that begins in Gen 16.

18 Neither Sarah nor Ishmael is mentioned by name, which probably means that the Galatians are presumed to be familiar with the basic story (cf. Barrett, 'Allegory', 161; for a different explanation, see Elliott, 'Choose your Mother', 671, 682). Philo also allegorizes the two women (e.g. *Cong.* 23), but for him they signify, as Martyn writes (*Galatians*, 436), 'timeless human qualities (Sarah as self-taught virtue and Hagar as imperfect training)'. Paul's allegorical reading has a historical (typological) aspect that Philo's lacks. Longenecker conveniently presents the texts from Philo (*Galatians*, 204–5).

19 Such is the case no matter how the difficult text-critical problem at the beginning of 4.25 is resolved. The clue to Paul's identification of Hagar with Mount Sinai (and thus with the Mosaic covenant) seems to lie in 4.25a, but this half-verse has proved notoriously difficult to understand. For a survey of opinion, see Tolmie, 'Allegorie', 170–1. If one accepts the reading of Nestle-Aland,²⁷ one can translate 'Now "Hagar" is Mount Sinai in Arabia' (cf. Borgen, 'Some Hebrew and Pagan Features', 157: the initial τó is equivalent to quotation marks). How Paul comes to this conclusion is not clear, and the Galatians would in any case have heard it as a simple assertion: 'I would have you know that the Hagar mentioned in the Genesis

Paul's own reckoning, some 'four hundred and thirty years' after the covenant with Abraham (3.17; cf. Exod 12.40 LXX). Paul thus plays the covenant with Abraham off against the covenant at Sinai, using polarizing language (slave/free, flesh/promise).²⁰ When Paul says 'two covenants', he clearly means 'two *different* covenants', or even 'two mutually exclusive covenants'.²¹

In 4.25–6, moreover, Paul correlates the two distinct covenants with two distinct Jerusalems and thereby provides a contemporizing interpretation of the Hagar and Sarah story. Allegorically representing adherence to the Mosaic covenant in Paul's own time and situation,²² Hagar, the slave woman (4.22, 30; cf. Gen 21.10), whose son Ishmael was 'begotten according to the flesh' (4.22), corresponds (συστοιχεῖ)²³ to 'the *present* Jerusalem', which is 'in slavery [to the Sinaitic legislation] along with her children',²⁴ whereas Sarah, the free woman (4.22–3), whose son Isaac was 'begotten through [God's] promise' (4.22; cf. Gen 17.16), corresponds²⁵ to 'the Jerusalem above' which is 'free [from the Sinaitic legislation]'

stories is actually a reference to Mount Sinai in Arabia, and thus to the covenant that enslaves.' For a recent attempt to solve this enigma, see Elliott, 'Choose your Mother', who sees a link to 'the familiar image of a Mountain Mother' in an Anatolian context (667); see, however, the pertinent critique of Brawley, 'Contextuality', 115 n. 62.

²⁰ The metaphorical contrast between slavery and freedom is prominent throughout, occurring six times in the passage (4.22, 23, 24–6, 30, 31; 5.1), followed by the contrast between flesh and promise/spirit (4.23, 28, 29). See Tolmie, 'Allegorie', 166–7.

²¹ Brawley ('Contextuality', 99–100, 114–16) attempts to show that Paul actually wants to 'synthesize' the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants (in his view, the troublemakers in Galatia sought to separate them) with 'a salvation history perspective' (116 n. 66) whereby the 'present' Jerusalem (symbolizing slavery) is superseded by the one 'above' (symbolizing freedom): 'The supersession is not temporal (Gentiles after Israel), nor ethnic (Gentiles or Israel), but qualitative (freedom over slavery)' (116). But Brawley misconstrues what Paul says about the two Jerusalems (see n. 31 below).

²² Note the repeated use of the present tense from 4.24 onwards.

²³ More strongly, 'stand[s] in the same line [with]' (BDAG 979); cf. Borgen, 'Some Hebrew and Pagan Features', 160 ('stand[s] in the same rank or line'), and Martyn, *Galatians*, 432, 449 ('located in the same oppositional column with'). Brawley ('Contextuality', 111 n. 46) and Koch (*Schrift*, 205 n. 14) disagree; according to Brawley, one would then expect ἀντιστοιχεῖ to be used (cf. LSJ, 163, 'stand opposite in rows or pairs'); according to Koch, one would then expect ἡ συστοιχεῖ ἡ νῦν Ἰερουσαλήμ. LSJ (1735) suggests 'corresponds' for Gal 4.25. Either way there are pairs of opposites that can be arranged in two columns.

²⁴ The subject of the verb 'corresponds' (συστοιχεῖ) in 4.25 could be either 'Hagar', 'Mount Sinai', or even 'one (covenant)'. In the latter case, 4.25a would be parenthetical: 'For these women are two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai bearing children for slavery, which is Hagar (4.24) – now "Hagar" is Mount Sinai in Arabia (4.25a), – corresponds to the present Jerusalem' (4.25b). However, the fact that 'the Jerusalem above' in the next verse is called 'our mother' and thus likened to a woman indicates that Hagar is the intended subject in 4.25b. A choice is not essential since 'Hagar' is taken to symbolize 'Mount Sinai' and thus also the covenant ratified there.

²⁵ See n. 23.

and 'our mother' (4.25–6).²⁶ Here it becomes evident that Paul posits what Martyn calls 'a distinctly apocalyptic contrast'²⁷ between 'the present Jerusalem' and 'the Jerusalem above', the former being a reality of the old age and the latter a reality of the new.²⁸ From the one, children are now being born 'according to the flesh', from the other, 'according to the Spirit' (4.29; cf. 5.16–17).²⁹ These two realities are engaged in an apocalyptic struggle in the present, i.e. in the time of Paul and the Galatians (cf. 4.30). The outcome of the struggle is not in doubt for Paul, *as the quotation from Isa 54.1 with its eschatological promise makes plain*. The quotation of this particular verse, a consolatory and prophetic word spoken to the barren and desolate Jerusalem, follows immediately upon the interpretation of Sarah as 'the Jerusalem above', who is 'our mother' (4.26). The 'free woman' (Sarah) had also been barren, having borne no children (Gen 11.30), as the Galatians know,³⁰

26 Having introduced the present Jerusalem and her enslaved children in 4.25, Paul rushes on to mention the Jerusalem above and label her 'our mother' in 4.26 without explicitly mentioning Sarah either by name or as 'the free woman', as in 4.22–3 and 4.31. But these latter verses provide the literary 'frame' of the intervening allegorical interpretation, and this frame demonstrates that the Galatians are to understand that Sarah/the free woman is presupposed in 4.26. There is also the characterization of the Jerusalem above as 'free', marking the link to 'the free woman' of 4.22–3, 31. One can paraphrase 4.26 as follows: 'But the Jerusalem above, who is our mother, is free, just as Sarah the mother of Isaac was.' The citation in 4.27 makes it certain that Sarah is simply being presupposed in 4.26 (see just below), just as 4.28 makes it certain that the promissory covenant with Abraham (3.14, 15–18; cf. Gen 17.2, 4, 7), though not explicitly mentioned, is also being presupposed in 4.26 (cf. Sellin, 'Hagar und Sara', 66, 70).

27 Martyn, *Galatians*, 440. This contrast could presumably also be characterized as 'an apocalyptic antinomy' by Martyn ('Apocalyptic Antinomies in Galatians', *NTS* 31 [1985] 111–23; *Theological Issues*, 111–24, esp. 115), akin to the antinomy between the flesh and the Spirit in 5.16–17, which is anticipated by the same contrast in 4.29 (cf. 3.3). See also Bouwman, 'Die Hagar- und Sara-Perikope', 3149.

28 Cf. Rev 3.12; 21.2, 10; 4 Ezra 7.26; 8.52; 10.27, 44–6, 54; 13.35–6; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 4.2–6. One would expect the counterpart to the 'present' Jerusalem to be the future Jerusalem ('the Jerusalem to come') or, conversely, the counterpart to the Jerusalem 'above' to be the Jerusalem on earth below. Paul mixes temporal and spatial categories, a common feature of apocalyptic thinking since the age to come already exists in heaven above while the present evil age is located on the earth (see Bouwman, 'Die Hagar- und Sara-Perikope', 3152). For Paul, moreover, the Jerusalem above is already making its presence felt on earth over against 'the present Jerusalem'.

29 Martyn, *Galatians*, 435, 444: the phrase 'according to the flesh' is adverbial, not adjectival, as is also the corresponding phrase 'according to the Spirit'. They can be rendered 'by the power of the Flesh' and 'by the power of the Spirit' (Martyn, *Galatians*, 435).

30 The Galatians would have seen the connection, knowing enough of the story of Sarah (and of Hagar) to make that connection. Sarah can remain anonymous and be called 'the free woman' instead precisely because of this familiarity. Paul summarizes this story, as familiar to the Galatians as to himself, in Gal 4.22–3 so that he can then give his allegorizing interpretation in the verses that follow (4.24–5). By calling her 'the free woman' (ἐλευθέρᾳ, absent from Gen

and she too had been in need of consolation, that consolation being God's stunning promise (received by Sarah when she was in fact already far beyond child-bearing age!) that she would indeed bear a child despite the seeming hopelessness of her situation from a human point of view (Gen 18.9–15). And that promise had come to pass (Gen 21.1–2, 6–7), as the Galatians also know (cf. 4.28: 'like Isaac'). Paul thus applies the word of consolation and the promise he hears in the words of (Second) Isaiah not to the earthly Jerusalem (as Second Isaiah does) but to the new or heavenly Jerusalem, represented by Sarah, once barren but now, solely as a result of God's faithfulness to his promise, with many children ('our mother').³¹ The Isaian text is thus brought by Paul into the service of his christologically determined apocalyptic eschatology: the promise contained in Isa 54.1 has come to pass, as his application of the text to the Galatians in the next verse bears out:³² 'You, brethren, are children of promise like Isaac' (4.28).³³

Jobes appropriately raises the question of the importance of barrenness in the quotation, since that theme provides the crucial link to the figure of Sarah in Genesis.³⁴ Her own approach is to provide a wide-ranging discussion of this

16–21) in 4.22–3, he anticipates that allegorical interpretation, allegorizing the story in the process (see n. 4 above). That the Galatians are assumed also to be familiar with Hagar is indicated by the fact that when Paul mentions her by name in 4.25 he does not pause to identify her as 'the slave woman' mentioned in 4.22–3. Similarly, Paul also assumes that the Galatians know that Mount Sinai was the place where the Mosaic covenant was ratified.

³¹ According to Brawley ('Contextuality', 114), 'Jerusalem assumes two identities in Isaiah, a Jerusalem in captivity and a free Jerusalem. . . . So also Jerusalem assumes two identities in Galatians 4, a Jerusalem in captivity and a free Jerusalem. As Isaiah contrasts captivity and restoration, so Galatians contrasts captivity and freedom' (in a similar way, Jobes, 'Jerusalem', 311). But in Paul's application of Isa 54.1, it is only the Jerusalem above which assumes a double identity, that of barrenness and desolation on the one side and that of fecundity on the other (see n. 3 above). The present Jerusalem has only *one*, constant, identity, that of slavery. The two Jerusalems are mutually exclusive and stand opposed to one another. Further, according to Brawley ('Contextuality', 116), 'Paul considers the two Jerusalems, of slavery and freedom, to have been a possibility in the course of history' for Ishmael and Isaac, for the Israel of the exile and beyond to his own time. But Brawley fails to see that 'the Jerusalem above' is an apocalyptic category and that Paul's notion of freedom concerns what he later calls 'new creation' (6.15) whereby those in slavery (including the children of 'Hagar', the present Jerusalem) are being liberated through the apocalyptic intrusion of God into the world in Christ. The contrast between the two Jerusalems is thus one that has come into being only with the arrival of Christ onto the world stage (3.23–5).

³² As Jobes ('Jerusalem', 303) observes: 'The force of Paul's argument is based on the major premise that the barren one of Isa 54.1 has given birth.'

³³ Martyn argues convincingly (*Galatians*, 443–4) that κατὰ Ἰσαάκ can probably best be translated 'after the pattern of Isaac', since Paul's intention is surely not to establish a historical, genealogical line from the Galatians back to Isaac. 'Isaac' functions here as the type of a Christian in Paul's own time, someone who was 'begotten' by God, true to his promise, and thus 'by the power of the Spirit' rather than by 'the power of the flesh' (4.29).

³⁴ Jobes, 'Jerusalem', 307. See further the next section below on this connection.

theme in the OT. The theological importance of the barrenness of Sarah and thus of the Jerusalem above, in my view, is that their offspring are born only as a result of God's faithfulness to his promise (cf. Gen 21.1–2 LXX: 'And the Lord visited Sarah, just as he had said [he would], and the Lord did to Sarah, just as he had spoken, and Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son . . .'). Isaac was thus 'a child of promise', and the Galatian Christians are likewise 'children of promise'.³⁵

The quotation from Isaiah is introduced with the connective particle γάρ, 'for (it stands written)'. Burton sees this particle as 'justifying or illustrating his [Paul's] conception of a new redeemed Jerusalem whose glory is to surpass that of the old'.³⁶ For Vouga, the citation functions as 'Autoritätsargument . . . um sowohl die Gleichzeitung von Sarah und ἡ ἱερουσαλήμ als auch ihre Bezeichnung als μήτηρ ἡμῶν zu begründen'.³⁷ 'The γάρ indicates', according to Jobes, 'that Paul intends the quotation to somehow advance, explain or ground his previous thought, which includes at least v. 26'.³⁸ It is more probable, however, that Paul has here placed the cart before the horse: i.e., his interpretation of the text precedes his citation of it, as is the case in 3.10: 'For all who rely on works of the Law are under a curse, for it is written (γέγραπται γάρ): Cursed be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them.'³⁹ The citation from scripture does not carry the argument forward; it states the source of that argument, in particular the claim that 'the Jerusalem above' is 'our mother',⁴⁰ but also the apocalyptic contrast posited between 'Sarah/the Jerusalem above/her many children' and 'Hagar/the present Jerusalem/her children'. For it is Isa 54.1 that has enabled Paul to link Sarah, the once barren, then fecund free woman, with the promise of a once barren, newly fecund Jerusalem, and to call this Jerusalem 'our mother'. The latter can be characterized as 'the Jerusalem above' (a heavenly Jerusalem) because her children have, 'like Isaac', been begotten through the divine promise, not 'according to the flesh'. The daring part of Paul's interpretation of Isa 54.1 is that this newly fecund, heavenly Jerusalem is distin-

35 Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 444: Paul 'sees a divine correspondence between the two *points*, God's action in the birth of Isaac and God's action in the birth of the Galatian congregations' (emphasis original). Between those two points is nothing, certainly no salvation history leading from Isaac to Christ; cf. Gal 3.16 (Christ is Abraham's one 'seed') and 3.19 ('until the seed [Christ] should come'). See Sellin, 'Hagar und Sarah', 71: 'Das Geburt Isaaks ist als δι' ἐπαγγελίας geschene ein *Wunder*' (emphasis original).

36 Burton, *Galatians*, 264.

37 Vouga, *Galater*, 118.

38 Jobes, 'Jerusalem', 302.

39 Betz, *Galatians*, 144. The same is true in 3.13 (also 3.8).

40 Jerusalem is not specifically called 'mother' in Second Isaiah, but that is clearly implied in 54.1 (as in 51.18; cf. 51.2 where Sarah is explicitly mentioned, and then in terms of her role as mother). See Isa 1.26 LXX: 'The faithful mother-city Zion', μητρόπολις πιστῇ Σιών (Jobes, 'Jerusalem', 310). See also for the notion of Jerusalem as mother, 4 Ezra 10.7; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 3.1.

guished from – indeed, apocalyptically set over against – ‘the present Jerusalem’, represented by Hagar. Isa 54.1 itself concerns only one Jerusalem, the woman in the last line probably representing another city, Babylon, as noted previously. Paul, however, discerns two distinct Jerusalems in that text, not only ‘the Jerusalem above’ but also ‘the present Jerusalem’, the latter having about as much to do with the former as Babylon had to do with the Jerusalem of Second Isaiah. The last line of Isa 54.1, which introduces a second female figure with a husband and children, is evidently taken by Paul to represent Hagar and thus ‘the present Jerusalem’ who along ‘with her children is in slavery (δουλεύει)’ (4.25).⁴¹

But now the question is: Where does that second Jerusalem in Paul’s reading of Isa 54.1 come from and whom does she represent? It is clear from the foregoing analysis that ‘the Jerusalem *above*’ does not refer to a heavenly city in the literal sense, but to the *church* that has been called into being by God (1.6; 5.8) as the eschatological people of God.⁴² God is as it were the husband of this heavenly Jerusalem and she is his bride.⁴³ Through Paul’s proclamation of the gospel of God’s unconditional grace and love as apocalyptically revealed in Christ (1.6, 12, 15–16; 2.20), God begets (4.23, 29) ‘children of promise, like Isaac’ (4.28; cf. 4.23 with Gen 18.14) by the Jerusalem above.⁴⁴ The Galatian Christians, addressed directly in 4.28, are such children of promise, as indeed is Paul himself (4.31; cf. 1.12, 15–16; 2.20). The children of promise, begotten in accordance with the Spirit rather than with the flesh (4.29; cf. 3.1–5), comprise the church(es) made up of former Jews and Gentiles (3.28), free from the enslaving power of the Law (cf. 3.23–5; 4.1–6). These children thereby also become residents of ‘the Jerusalem above’ which, like a mother, gives birth to new children.

41 See J. Bligh, *Galatians* (London: St Paul, 1969) 403, as cited by Verhoef (*‘Er staat geschreven’*, 242 n. 257): ‘He [Paul] understood the second couplet [of Isa 54.1] as a contrast between two distinct women (not between two stages in the life of one woman), and between two Jerusalems.’ See n. 3 above.

42 According to Martyn (*Galatians*, 440), ‘Paul may picture this church as the community that is both above and future, being ready to descend to earth, at the parousia’, though he also observes (440 n. 142) that the ‘image is that of churches [cf. Gal 1.2: ‘churches of Galatia’] on earth that are descended from a church in heaven’.

43 Cf. Isa 54.5, where Yahweh is the husband of the earthly Jerusalem and she is his bride. See H. Leene on Jerusalem as bride and mother in the OT, esp. Second Isaiah (‘Sion als moeder en als bruid: Bijbels-theologische betekenissen van Jeruzalem’, *Jeruzalem: Beeld en Realiteit* [ed. W. Haan *et al.*; Kampen: Kok, 1996] 24–38).

44 Because of his role in God’s work among the Gentiles, Paul could himself be regarded as the spiritual father of the Galatian Christians. He writes in 1 Cor 4.15 that he ‘begot’ (γεννάω) the Christians in Corinth ‘in Christ Jesus through the gospel’; he is thus their ‘father’ in Christ, as he was of the runaway slave Onesimus according to Phlm 10. See Martyn, *Galatians*, 451. In Galatians, Paul maintains with particular emphasis that his gospel and his apostleship both originate in God (1.12, 15–16); he thus regards his apostolic work and his gospel as God’s own.

Analogously, when Paul refers to ‘the present Jerusalem’ (represented by Hagar) he undoubtedly does not have the earthly city as such in view but a particular community corresponding to the church(es) represented by the heavenly Jerusalem.⁴⁵ In the traditional interpretation, ‘the present Jerusalem’ and her children represent contemporary non-Christian Judaism, whose geographical center was Jerusalem.⁴⁶ Martyn, however, has recently argued convincingly that, just as earlier in Galatians (1.17, 18; 2.1), the word ‘Jerusalem’ is being used as a metonym not for the Jewish community in Jerusalem, but for the Law-observant, Jewish-Christian church located there.⁴⁷ This church, according to Martyn, sponsored its own mission to Gentiles, as Galatians itself attests.⁴⁸ Until about 50 CE, the church in Jerusalem was under the apostolic leadership of the three ‘pillars’, James, Cephas/Peter, and John (2.9; cf. Acts 1–15). In the 50s, when Galatians was probably

45 Bachmann (‘Die andere Frau’, 127) rightly notes that Paul has two communities in view from the outset, as the reference to ‘children’ in 4.25 and 4.28 indicates.

46 E.g. Betz, *Galatians*. See the various critiques of this interpretation by Hays, *Echoes*, 116–17; Martyn, *Galatians*, 447–66; *idem*, ‘Covenants’; Bachmann, ‘Die andere Frau’; and Brawley, ‘Contextuality’.

47 Martyn, *Galatians*, 440, 458–66; *idem*, *Theological Issues*, 25–36; cf. F. Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief* (5th edn; HTKNT 9; Freiburg: Herder, 1988) 325. In Gal 1.17, 18 and 2.1, Paul uses the neuter plural spelling of Jerusalem, Ἱεροσόλυμα, perhaps for the sake of his Gentile readers in Galatia (cf. J. Murphy-O’Connor, ‘ἹΕΡΟΣΟΛΥΜΑ/ΙΕΡΟΥΣΑΛΗΜ in Galatians’, *ZNW* 90 [1999] 280–1). In Gal 4.25–6, he changes to the feminine singular spelling (Ἱερουαλήμ), which he commonly uses elsewhere (Rom 15.19, 25, 26, 31; 1 Cor 16.3), probably for two reasons: it is the form preferred by the LXX (the neuter plural spelling is found only in later deuterocanonical works), and this form is needed for his allegorical-typological interpretation. Along the same lines, see Bachmann (‘ἹΕΡΟΣΟΛΥΜΑ und ΙΕΡΟΥΣΑΛΗΜ im Galaterbrief’, *ZNW* 91 [2000] 288–9) against Murphy-O’Connor (‘ἹΕΡΟΣΟΛΥΜΑ/ΙΕΡΟΥΣΑΛΗΜ in Galatians’), who attributes the switch to the influence of ‘the intruders’ who were using the feminine form in connection with ‘the Mother Church’ in Jerusalem.

48 Martyn, ‘Covenants’, 194 n. 9: ‘Paul’s interpretive point of departure [is] the two Gentile missions in his own time.’ Bachmann (‘Die andere Frau’, 144 n. 46), however, followed by Brawley (‘Contextuality’), rejects Martyn’s thesis that the issue underlying this passage is a conflict between two different missions to Gentiles. He argues that the ‘we’ of 4.26 and 4.31 militates against this thesis, as against the thesis that Paul is opposing ‘am Gesetz festhaltende Judaisten’ (citing Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 327). With this ‘we’, according to Bachmann, Paul includes not only Gentiles but also Jews like himself who have become believers. That is true enough, but the letter is written to the Gentile Christians of Galatia who were brought to faith in Christ by Paul and who are being tempted by ‘a different gospel’ for the Gentiles (1.6), one that involves observing the Law, beginning with circumcision, in addition to believing in Christ (Gal 5.2–4; 6.12–13). Brawley (‘Contextuality’, 114 n. 59) argues that since ‘the two Jerusalems are metaphors for slavery and freedom’, ‘the present Jerusalem cannot be identified with the Jerusalem church as Martyn avers’. It is not clear, however, why the metaphorical meaning of necessity excludes the metonymical use of the name for a community/church, especially since the two Jerusalems are expressly said to have ‘children’.

written,⁴⁹ it apparently came under the primary leadership of James (cf. 2.12; Acts 21.18). The ‘husband’ mentioned in the fourth line of Isa 54.1 may thus *in Paul’s thinking* refer primarily to James, who metaphorically ‘begets’ (γεννάω) children by ‘the present [church in] Jerusalem’ and does so ‘according to the flesh’ (4.23, 29), i.e. through requiring fleshly circumcision of Gentile converts (cf. 3.3; 6.12).⁵⁰ Paul likens the missionary successes of ‘the present Jerusalem’ among Gentiles to ‘bearing (γεννώσα) children for slavery’ (4.24).⁵¹ Other agents or residents of this ‘present Jerusalem’ in Paul’s view are ‘the false brothers’ (2.4) who sought to undermine his work in Antioch and/or Jerusalem (2.1, 11), ‘the circumcision party’ active in Antioch at the behest of James and his emissaries (2.12), and the Christian Jews who have made their way into the Galatian churches (1.7–9) in order to ‘compel’ (6.12; cf. 2.3, 14) the Gentile Christians in Galatia to practice circumcision and adhere to all the commandments of the Sinaitic Law as a precondition for obtaining righteousness or rectification (5.2–4, 7–12; 6.12–13). They may well have referred to the church in Jerusalem as ‘our mother’.⁵² In 4.29, Paul intimates that

49 Galatians, it is important to remember, was written after Paul’s traumatic break with the church of Antioch (Gal 2.11–14; cf. Acts 15.34–41), which also involved a break with his colleague Barnabas (Gal 2.13; cf. Acts 15.39) and Peter (Gal 2.14). Furthermore, the dispute that led to Paul’s break with Antioch was initiated by the arrival of ‘emissaries from James’ (τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου), who are associated with (and perhaps identical to) ‘the circumcision party’ (τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς) mentioned in the same verse (Gal 2.12; cf. Acts 10.45; 11.2). Gal 2.11–14 indicates at the very least that Barnabas, Peter *and James* did not have the same understanding of the agreement reached in Jerusalem (Gal 2.7–9) as Paul did, particularly in connection with its implications for the Gentile mission. If Gal 2.11–14 is any indication, James seems also to have fallen under the influence of ‘the circumcision party’ after the conference recounted in Gal 2.1–10 (cf. Acts 21.18–21), as did Barnabas and Peter.

50 The verb γεννάω, which is strikingly absent from the Genesis account, has both a masculine meaning (‘beget a child’, 4.23, 29) and a feminine one (‘bear a child’, 4.24). For Paul, it is a missionary verb (see Martyn, *Galatians*, 434, 451–4; cf. Phlm 10; 1 Cor 4.14–15). Martyn (*Galatians*, 443) thinks that the church in Jerusalem is for Paul not only the ‘mother’ (cf. 4.24) but also the ‘husband’ referred to in Isa 54.1 (4.27). Martyn recognizes that this combination causes an ‘inconsistency’, but he explains it with the comment that inconsistency ‘is characteristic of allegorical interpretation’. The hypothesis that James is the missionary father of the children of the present Jerusalem makes such an explanation unnecessary, since there is then no inconsistency. Martyn himself (*Galatians*, 463) refers to the Jerusalem church ‘under the leadership of James’ (cf. *ibid.*, 460–1). What Martyn says about the role of the ‘husband’, that he ‘sponsors – and on a human level – legitimates’ the Law-observant mission to the Gentiles, would still apply and perhaps make better sense in view of 2.12 (‘emissaries from James’).

51 The passage is thus not about the old covenant (Judaism) having been superseded by the new covenant (Christianity). According to Martyn (*Galatians*, 453), the present tense shows that ‘Paul refers here to the work of the Teachers [Martyn’s term for the troublemakers in Galatia] in the Law-observant mission to Gentiles’ (see also 4.20: ‘so also now’).

52 See Martyn, *Galatians*, 462–3.

these Christian-Jewish evangelists⁵³ are ‘now’ persecuting the Galatian Gentile-Christians with their insistence on circumcision and full Law-observance.⁵⁴ In 4.30, he clearly implies (adapting a citation from Gen 21.10 to the Galatian situation) that the new evangelists are to be expelled from the Galatian churches forthwith (‘but what does the scripture say?’).⁵⁵

‘So, brethren’, Paul sums up, addressing the Galatian Christians directly once more (4.31), ‘we are not children of the slave woman [of the present Jerusalem, i.e. of the Law-observant church in Jerusalem run by James with its own mission to the Gentiles] but of the free woman [of the Jerusalem above, i.e. the church God has called into being through the gospel of His unconditional grace which I, Paul, proclaimed to you]’.⁵⁶ Paul then concludes with a ringing announcement and an urgent exhortation: ‘For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery!’ (5.1). The beginning of the passage with its reference to those who ‘wish to be under the Law’ (4.21) and the subsequent verses (5.2–4) make clear that the yoke of slavery referred to is that of the Mosaic Law, beginning with circumcision. The children and the residents of ‘the present Jerusalem’, because (and only because) they sponsor a mission to the Gentiles requiring circumcision and observance of the Mosaic Law in addition to faith in

53 I call them ‘Christian-Jewish [rather than Jewish-Christian] evangelists’ because (a) they seem to have taken their firm theological point of departure from the Mosaic Law rather than from Christ (cf. Gal 2.15–16; 3.1–5; 6.12–13) – hence they can be more accurately described as Christian Jews than as Jewish Christians – and because (b) they ‘proclaimed’ or ‘preached’ (εὐαγγελίζομαι, ‘evangelize’) what they regarded as ‘gospel’ (cf. Gal 1.6–8).

54 I leave aside a consideration of what this ‘persecution’ may have consisted of or whether the Christian-Jewish evangelists would have shared this assessment of their activity among the Galatians. When Paul refers to persecution elsewhere in Galatians (1.13, 23; 5.11; 6.12), he seems to have in view persecution of Christian Jews by non-Christian Jews (see E. Baasland, ‘Persecution: A Neglected Factor in the Letter to the Galatians’, *ST* 38 [1984] 135–50). Here, however, the issue is the persecution of Gentile Christians, and it seems unlikely that (non-Christian) Jews would bother to persecute tiny groups of Gentiles (living far outside Palestine) who had embraced as the Messiah someone recently crucified as a criminal by the Romans with the cooperation of their leaders in Jerusalem.

55 Gal 4.29–30, addressed to the Gentile Christians in Galatia, further shows that ‘the present Jerusalem’ cannot refer to non-Christian Jews as in the traditional interpretation of the passage. Paul would not need to ask the Gentile Christians in Galatia to expel non-Christian Jews from their churches; such Jews would not be found there (Martyn, *Galatians*, 452 n. 171); contra M. D. Nanos, *The Irony of Galatians: Paul’s Letter in First-Century Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), who makes an unconvincing case for the contrary; see my forthcoming review in *Biblical Interpretation*.

56 This verse is clearly the goal of Paul’s allegorical interpretation (cf. Bachmann, ‘Die andere Frau’, 136–41), namely, to re-establish the identity (also Martyn, *Galatians*, 446, 451) of the Galatian Christians as children of ‘the free woman’, of the Jerusalem above, begotten by the power of the Spirit and now children of God (cf. 4.6–7). Only then can Paul utter the exhortation in 5.1 to stand fast.

Christ, are part and parcel of the old age of slavery,⁵⁷ whereas the children and the residents of 'the Jerusalem above' are the beachhead of the new age of freedom. Second Isaiah's oracle is understood by Paul to have had in view the new age inaugurated by Christ, the age in which a new community has been created, free from enslaving powers, in this case the Sinaitic Law.

According to Genesis, God promised many descendants to Abraham through *both* Isaac *and* Ishmael (Gen 15.1–6; 17.2–6, 16, 20; 22.17–18), and Paul may have had this in mind in his christologically shaped apocalyptic interpretation of Isa 54.1. In Paul's reading of the verse, the children of the free woman (Gentile Christians free from the Law) will be many, surpassing those of the slave woman (Gentile Christians compelled to observe the Law, thereby becoming Christian Jews). It is possible that Paul (if not Second Isaiah) presupposes a present tense in the third line of Isa 54.1, instead of a future: 'for many *are* the children of the desolate one'.⁵⁸ It is difficult to know, however, whether the Gentile Christians converted by Paul in accordance with his Law-free gospel already outnumbered (in his perception at any rate) the Gentile Christians converted by Christian-Jewish evangelists emanating from Jerusalem. He evidently believes that the promise has been fulfilled or, perhaps better, is now in the process of being fulfilled. Ever since Christ, the one seed of Abraham (3.16, 19), 'came' (3.19, 23, 25) into the world to 'redeem' those 'under the Law' (4.4–5), the (eschatological) future belongs, according to Paul's reading of Isa 54.1, to the children begotten by the Spirit.⁵⁹

III. What prompted Paul to make use of Isa 54.1?

'Why does Paul', Martyn asks, 'turn from Genesis 16–21 to this prophetic text with its contrasting picture?'⁶⁰ The appeal to material from Gen 16–21, which is summarized in 4.22–3, is readily explicable from the situation in the Galatian

⁵⁷ Paul can refer positively to the Law-observant churches in Jerusalem and Judea (cf. Gal 1.22; Rom 15.27) since for him circumcision, like uncircumcision, is now a matter of indifference (Gal 5.6; 6.15). What matters is 'believing in Christ' (Gal 2.16). In Galatians, Paul finds unacceptable the *imposition* of circumcision and the Mosaic Law on Gentile Christians since this imposition presupposes that Christ's faithful death is insufficient for their rectification (2.21). See Martyn, 'Covenants', 204–5.

⁵⁸ So e.g. NRSV, and Burton, Betz, Longenecker, and Martyn; otherwise Vouga.

⁵⁹ That 'those under the Law' includes, theologically speaking, Gentiles is evident in 3.13–14; 4.1–7. See Martyn, *Galatians*, 334–6. It certainly includes Gentile Christians who were beginning to place themselves under it, as the Christians in Galatians seemingly were doing (cf. 1.6; 3.1; 4.10, 21), in response to the pressure put on them by Christian-Jewish evangelists, such as those who came into the Galatian churches (6.12).

⁶⁰ Martyn, *Galatians*, 442. Barrett ('Allegory', 164) poses a similar question ('Why does Paul use this passage?'). See Jobes ('Jerusalem', 303), who suspects that 'if this passage were excised from the text, most modern interpretations of this passage would not be substantially altered'.

churches. The Christian-Jewish evangelists who invaded the churches undoubtedly had their own favorite scriptural passages to convince the Gentile Christians in Galatia to take upon themselves the practice of circumcision and thus the other commandments of the Law. A prime candidate is Gen 17.9–14, which mandates circumcision for Abraham and his male offspring, including Ishmael (17.23, 25–6). For Isaac and his descendants circumcision functioned as a sign of the covenant God made with Abraham (17.19–21; cf. 21.4), thereby setting them apart from the other (Ishmaelite) descendants of Abraham.⁶¹ Ishmael and his descendants (the Gentiles), they would maintain, may well be the children of Abraham alongside Isaac and his descendants (the Jews), but without circumcision, i.e. without becoming Jews subsequently obedient to the whole Law (cf. Gal 5.3), they cannot inherit (cf. Gen 15.3–8 LXX) the promises made to him. Concerning the Genesis material, Barrett writes:

Two points are clear: (1) This is a part of the Old Testament that Paul would have been unlikely to introduce of his own accord; its value from his point of view is anything but obvious, and the method of interpretation is unusual with him. . . . It stands in the epistle because his opponents used it and he could not escape it.⁶² (2) Its plain, surface meaning supports not Paul but

61 See *Jub.* 16.16–18, which interprets the Genesis account surrounding the birth of Isaac as follows: 'And through Isaac a name and seed would be named for him. And all of the seed of his [Abraham's] sons would become nations. And they would be counted with the nations. But from the sons of Isaac one [Jacob] would become a holy seed and he would not be counted among the nations [Gentiles] because he would become the portion of the Most High and all his seed would fall (by lot) into that which God will rule so that he might become a people (belonging) to the Lord, a (special) possession from all people, and so that he might become a kingdom of priests and a holy people.' Trans. O. S. Wintermute in J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (vol. 2; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985) 88.

62 Tolmie ('Allegorie', 164–5) rejects this claim, even though he admits it is possible. He does not explain how or why the Galatians were familiar with the story, as he concedes, if not through the teaching of 'die opponente'. According to Borgen ('Hebrew and Pagan Features', 153), 'it seems improbable that Paul, by a fresh interpretation of his own making, could identify the gentle Hagar with the Jewish covenant of the law. Paul's way of arguing would then hardly stand up against the view of his opponents.' Borgen's solution is to look at the depiction of Hagar in Philo (dismissed by Barrett as not helpful), who emphasizes that Hagar was an Egyptian (Gen 16.1–2) who became a Hebrew by choice. Even if Barrett is right, writes Borgen, Paul is still 'drawing on other Jewish expository traditions, traditions which see the slave girl Hagar and her son with Abraham within the context of Jewish thought about gentiles who become proselytes and live under the law of Moses' (163). But why would the use of other Jewish expository traditions convince the Gentile Galatians more than Paul's own way of arguing? Witherington (*Grace*, 324) also turns to Philo and discovers 'that for Philo Hagar symbolizes elementary learning or education', that is, 'grammar, geometry, astronomy, rhetoric, music, and all other branches of [elementary] intellectual study' (*Congr.*, 11). 'In short', concludes Witherington, 'she symbolizes something very close to what Paul calls the τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου' in Gal 4.3 (cf. 4.9). However that may be, it is clear that the Christian-Jewish evangelists and Paul share a common starting point with respect to Hagar: she represents the slavery

the Judaizers: the Jews, who live by the law of Moses, are the heirs of Abraham and it is to Jews that the promise applies. . . . The true descendants of Abraham are the Jews, who inhabit Jerusalem. Here are the true people of God; and it will follow that Jerusalem is the authoritative centre of the renewed people of God, now called the church. Those who are not prepared to attach themselves to this community by the approved means (circumcision) must be cast out; they cannot hope to inherit promises made to Abraham and his seed.⁶³

Paul responds with his allegorical (and typological) interpretation of the Genesis account.⁶⁴ Through this reading of what 'stands written' in Genesis about Abraham, Hagar and Sarah, and Ishmael and Isaac, Paul declares that Christian Jews emanating from Jerusalem with their own mission to the Gentiles are not the offspring of Sarah allegorically interpreted, nor then children of promise as Isaac was. They are the 'children' of the slave woman, thus slaves themselves, and can trace their descent back to Abraham only through Ishmael, to whom the Abrahamic covenant did not in fact apply even if he was also circumcised!⁶⁵

According to Martyn, Isa 54.1 was 'of no service' to 'the Teachers' (as he labels the Christian-Jewish evangelists in Galatia),⁶⁶ but that judgment may be questioned especially if, as Martyn also claims, 'the Teachers' referred to the Jerusalem church as 'our mother' in its role of sponsoring a Law-observant mission to Gentiles.⁶⁷ They were in any event as capable of seeing a connection between the story of Sarah and the oracle of Isa 54.1 as Paul himself, as the later rabbinic evidence that Isa 54.1 was used as the *haftarah* to Gen 16 in the liturgy of

under which Gentiles are presumed to live (Martyn, *Galatians*, 449). Paul's radical move, anticipated by earlier parts of the letter, especially 4.1–10, is to equate being 'under the Law' (ὕπὸ νόμου) with the slavery under 'the elemental spirits of the universe' (ὕπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου) from which the Gentile Christians in Galatians have been freed.

63 Barrett, 'Allegory', 162.

64 One may ask how Paul could ignore Gen 17.9–14 (apart from the possible allusion contained in the term 'flesh') and the circumcision commandment (contrast Rom 4). We can only speculate, of course, but a possible answer is that he works from the assumption that God's promise to Sarah and Abraham concerning the birth of a son (Gen 15.1–6; 17.1–8), to which the term 'covenant' is applied apart from any mention of circumcision (Gen 17.2, 4, 7), preceded the commandment to circumcise (17.9–14), just as the fulfillment of the promise in the birth of Isaac (21.1–3) preceded his circumcision (21.4). The promise and the fulfillment of that promise thus had nothing whatsoever to do with Abraham obeying the commandment to circumcise his sons.

65 The principle Paul enunciates in Gal 3.18 thus remains operative in his allegorical reading of the Genesis narrative: 'If the inheritance were obtainable on the basis of the Law, it would no longer be on the basis of a promise. But God granted it to Abraham through a promise.' Paul clearly implies that Abrahamic covenant and circumcision do not go together, despite what Gen 17.9–14 plainly says (see previous note and Rom 4).

66 Martyn, *Galatians*, 441.

67 Ibid., 441, 462–3.

the synagogue demonstrates.⁶⁸ The step from the story of Sarah to Isa 54.1 is not so great in view of two facts and one possibility:

(1) Jobes points out that there are considerable verbal similarities between Gen 11.30 (καὶ ἦν Σαρα στεῖρα καὶ οὐκ ἔτεκνοποίει) and Isa 54.1 (εὐφράνθητι στεῖρα ἢ οὐ τίκτουςα).⁶⁹ In fact, as Barrett rightly observes, '[t]he whole story of Genesis proceeds from the fact that Sarah was barren⁷⁰ . . . This word provides a link with Isa 54.1.⁷¹ Paul exploits that link.⁷² As indicated above, however, Paul's use of Isa 54.1 assumes that his Galatian readers can also see the link, if not exactly between Isa 54.1 and Gen 11.30, at least between the barrenness of Jerusalem in the citation and that of Sarah in Gen 16–21.⁷³

(2) In the whole OT, Sarah is mentioned by name outside Genesis only in Second Isaiah (51.2). Here too her role as a mother is recalled:

ἐμβλέψατε εἰς Ἀβραὰμ τὸν πατέρα ὑμῶν
καὶ εἰς Σαρραν τὴν ὠδίνουσαν ὑμᾶς
ὅτι εἷς ἦν καὶ ἐκάλεσα αὐτὸν καὶ εὐλόγησα αὐτὸν
καὶ ἡγάπησα αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπλήθυνα αὐτόν

Look to Abraham your father,
and to Sarah who bears you in travail,⁷⁴
for he was one and I called him, and blessed him,
and loved him, and multiplied him.

68 See J. Mann *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue. Vol. I. The Palestinian Triennial Cycle: Genesis and Exodus* (New York: KTAV, 1971) lii–liii, 122 (cf. Barrett, 'Allegory', 169 n. 29; Bouwman, 'Die Hagar- und Sara-Perikope', 3150). Evidence for such *haftarah* readings does occur in the NT (Acts 13.15; Luke 4.17; John 6.45), though there is no firm evidence that the cycle of readings was fixed or uniform in the NT period. The evidence compiled by Mann points to considerable diversity even in the rabbinic period and great uncertainty about earlier times. Sellin ('Hagar und Sara', 66 n. 14) suggests that the earliest attestation of a link between Sarah and Isa 54.1 may be found in Philo, *Praem.* 158f.

69 Jobes, 'Jerusalem', 306–7.

70 Barrett cites here the Hebrew word, but the link is provided for Paul (and the Galatians) by the LXX, not the MT.

71 Barrett, 'Allegory', 164.

72 Paul is thus making use of the technique of *g'zēra šāwā*, as Barrett points out.

73 Gen 11.30 is the only passage in Genesis in which the word στεῖρα ('barren') occurs in connection with Sarah, but her childlessness is repeatedly emphasized in Gen 16–21.

74 The present tense of the participle is striking. An alternate translation could be: 'and to Sarah, the one bearing you in travail'. The present tense is then presumably timeless, and the sense demanded by the context might then be: 'that bore you', as L. C. L. Brenton translates (source: *BibleWorks* 5 [2002]; cf. *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and Apocrypha with an English Translation* [reprint; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976]), which is also how the corresponding Hebrew verb, the Po'lel imperfect בָּרַחֲלִי, is commonly translated (KJV, NRSV), even though the Hebrew verb means the same as the Greek ὠδίνω (cf. BDB 297). The meaning here of both the Hebrew and the Greek is evidently 'to bear children in travail'.

(3) Given Isa 51.2, it is possible that the writer of Second Isaiah *intended* to make an allusion to Sarah and her barrenness in Isa 54.1.⁷⁵ If so, it explains why the link between Gen 16–21 and Isa 54.1 could be easily made by Paul and by Jews in the rabbinic period.

In view of these two facts and the one possibility, one must judge the Christian-Jewish evangelists in Galatia of having been capable of interpreting Isa 54.1 in accordance with their own views about Hagar and Sarah and their respective offspring. There are good indications, however, that Paul chose the quotation from Isa 54.1 himself.⁷⁶ There is, first, no contemporary evidence to suggest that anyone else had associated Isa 54.1 with the Genesis account.⁷⁷ Second, Paul uses Isa 54.1 as the scriptural basis for his peculiar, allegorizing interpretation of the Genesis account. He could scarcely have done so without further ado had the troublemakers in Galatia also used this text for *their* understanding of the Genesis account. Isa 54.1 provides Paul with the lens through which to read Gen 16–21, and he shares it here with his Galatian readers. It is unlikely, then, that Paul took this text from the exegetical arsenal of the new evangelists in Galatia in order to give it another interpretation for the Galatians, one consistent with the gospel of liberation from the Law. Paul found support for his peculiar interpretation of the Abrahamic covenant in words that also ‘stand written’ in the scripture, namely in the words of Isa 54.1, through which Paul can, as Barrett writes, ‘reverse the family relationships of the descendants of Abraham’.⁷⁸

There is, third, also strong evidence that Paul was thoroughly familiar with Second Isaiah when he wrote Galatians and that he made grateful use of its language and *Vorstellungen* in order to articulate his own christologically shaped apocalyptic eschatology and his own apostolic vocation at the turn of the ages. Gal 1.15–16 (‘God . . . set me apart from the womb of my mother and called me through his grace . . . that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles’) appears to be indebted primarily to Isa 49.1–6;⁷⁹ Gal 4.19 (‘My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ be formed in you’) recalls Isa 45.10 in its Isaian context;⁸⁰ and Gal

75 So W. A. M. Beuken, ‘Isaiah LIV: The Multiple Identity of the Person Addressed’, *OTS* 19 (1974) 29–70; see the discussion in Childs (*Isaiah*, 427–8), who, however, rejects this proposal. Jobes (‘Jerusalem’, 306–7) claims that ‘Isaiah develops the barren-woman theme by echoing the Genesis account of Sarah’.

76 Barrett, ‘Allegory’, 164; Martyn, *Galatians*, 441.

77 Barrett, ‘Allegory’, 164.

78 *Ibid.*, 167.

79 See B. J. Koet, ‘Roeping of Beking? Paulus volgens Handelingen vergeleken met de Paulus van Galaten’, *Eén auteur, twee boeken: Lucas en de Handelingen van de Apostelen* (ed. P. Schmidt; Leuven/’s-Hertogenbosch: Acco, 1991) 77–95 (83).

80 Martyn, *Galatians*, 428–9. It may then be significant that the verb ὀδίνω (bear, be in travail) occurs in this passage, in Isa 51.2 (where Sarah is explicitly mentioned), and in Isa 54.1 (see Brawley, ‘Contextuality’, 113); this word and its cognates occur nowhere else in Second Isaiah.

6.15 ('a new creation') evokes the imagery of Isa 43.18–19 (also 65.17–25).⁸¹ It is distinctly possible, then, that Isa 51.2 was known to Paul and that it led him to Isa 54.1.⁸² Paul chose to cite Isa 54.1, instead of 51.2,⁸³ probably because the passage mentions two women, corresponding to Sarah and Hagar in Paul's interpretation, and also alludes to their respective children, corresponding to the apocalyptic contrast (antinomy) between the two Jerusalems. It is true that Sarah in Genesis was not only barren, she was also married, whereas Hagar was not. Paul's use of Isa 54.1 may thus seem somewhat 'arbitrary'⁸⁴ and inappropriate, at least at first sight. However, the 'fit' between the Isaian text and Paul's allegorical-typological interpretation of Abraham's two sons and their respective mothers is close enough to leave open the possibility that Paul's reflection on Isa 54.1 from the perspective of the gospel and in light of developments in Galatia prompted his allegorical-typological interpretation of the Genesis account in the first place.⁸⁵ Isa 54.1 with its picture of *two* contrasting women provided Paul with a pair of opposites (or, better, an apocalyptic contrast or antinomy) that enabled him then also to find other pairs in the Genesis story: two covenants instead of one, slave/free, flesh/promise, flesh/Spirit, and even the two Jerusalems. Paul's reversal of the family relationships of the descendants of Abraham is thereby brought into the service of an eschatology that is both christological and apocalyptic.⁸⁶

Witherington (*Grace*, 325, 329) tentatively suggests on this basis that Paul plays the role of Sarah in the allegory; he is the Jerusalem above who has given birth to the Galatian children. Witherington finds support in the fact that Paul quotes words Sarah said to Hagar in 4.30 (Gen 21.10): 'The voice of Sarah is now also the voice of Paul' (325). A difficulty (recognized by Witherington) is that Paul includes himself when he refers to this Jerusalem as 'our mother'. Another is that the words cited from Gen 21.10 are attributed to 'the scripture', not to Sarah.

81 One may also note that one quarter of the approximately 100 quotations from the OT in the letters of Paul come from Isaiah (see Smith, 'Pauline Literature', 273). Most of these come from Second Isaiah.

82 So Verhoef, '*Er staat geschreven*', 207; Hays, *Echoes*, 120; Brawley, 'Contextuality', 99. See n. 74 above.

83 One might think that the present tense used in connection with Sarah in Isa 51.2 ('Sarah who bears you in travail') would be attractive to Paul and his allegorical equation of 'Sarah' with 'the Jerusalem above'.

84 Barrett, 'Allegory', 167.

85 Cf. Brawley, 'Contextuality', 99.

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